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CIA Aug. 01 Drug Traffic
Sec. 4.01.2 Politics of
Heroin in SE Asia

• An Internal Attack To Slow Drug Traffic

Like some others, the British magazine, The Economist, takes a rather dim view of the \$35 million that America is paying farmers in Turkey in return for a halt to the growing of opium.

"Trade in Turkey is bad but the narcotics dealers are doing well in Thailand," the magazine notes. "Just when the Americans are congratulating themselves that the opium traffic from Turkey is ending they discover that more heroin is coming into the United States from Southeast Asia than they realized."

Stemming the flow of heroin into the United States appears to be at the peak of controversy now, particularly in wake of the announcement of a forthcoming book, "The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia." The book charges that the Central Intelligence Agency is in collusion with those trafficking in drugs — an allegation heatedly denied by that agency.

The Economist says that the CIA protestations "ring rather hollow since the agency's own report appears to support much of the evidence used against the (Southeast Asia) governments in the region."

A high level report of the CIA claims that it will be virtually impossible to stem the flow of drugs from Southeast Asia because of the lack of cooperation from both the governments concerned and from Americans living in the area.

It is seeming folly to hand out some \$35 million to farmers in Turkey to halt one source of opium, while more numerous sources openly proliferate.

The Economist made the assessment that the most effective part of the attack on heroin seems to be within the United States itself, judging from figures. It notes that the federal narcotics authorities claim to have seized an average of 71 pounds of heroin a month, or \$1 million worth, on the East Coast alone in the past 12 months. This has sent the price of one gram of heroin from \$418 to \$785 — no comfort to those already addicted, but a deterrent to others becoming hooked on the drug.

The total number of heroin addicts in this nation is not known. But the problem is serious and President Nixon has now asked Congress to add another \$135 million to the fight against drugs, for a total outlay of more than \$300 million next year.

There are those who feel that the drug problem will not be settled until some way is found to eliminate the desire for the stuff. This may well be the case.

However, until this is accomplished, the obvious priority would be the next best thing — elimination of the flow of drugs across U.S. borders, by a concentrated attack from within.